

New York State will pay \$30 million for conservation easements on nearby tracts

by Mary Peryea

In the final days of his tenure, New York Governor David A. Paterson inked a deal with the Nature Conservancy whereby the state will pay \$30 million for conservation easements on 89,000 acres of Adirondack timberlands.

The lands are spread across 27 towns in the Adirondacks. The largest tracts are in Long Lake, Newcomb and Indian Lake.

The purchase, which closed last Thursday, will prohibit development and establish perpetual public rights to several snowmobile trails, as well as some new hiking and fishing access. It will allow timber harvesting to continue on the tracts.

The conservation easement establishes public rights to almost 30 miles of snowmobile trails, including a new 15-mile trail between Newcomb and Indian Lake.

"I'm not a big fan of state ownership of property in the Adirondacks," said Newcomb Town Supervisor George Canon. "In this case, the easement still provides

for timber production. It still provides for recreational use of the property."

W i l d e r n e s s conservation in the Adirondack Park is a sore spot with some local residents, who feel it's an obstacle to established businesses, as well as those looking to start new enterprises.

Michael Carr, executive director of the Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, lauded the economic benefits of the purchase, including continued timber harvesting and expanded tourism.

"We're hoping to drive some investment in infrastructure," he said, "with business owners, local inns, restaurants, gas stations and service facilities willing to invest."

The Nature Conservancy paid \$110 million for 161,000 acres of former Finch, Pruyn and Company timberland in 2007. It sold 92,000 acres of that land to Danish pension fund ATP Timberland Invest in 2009. The sale to ATP

included 60 hunting camps with about 1,000 members. The new owner will maintain those leases.

The Nature Conservancy plans to sell an additional 65,000 acres of land to the state in phases for addition to the forest preserve. The state already owns 2.5 million acres in the Adirondacks, with 600,000 under conservation easements. The Adirondack Park Agency regulates other development.

Mr. Carr acknowledged that the state might be criticized for spending such a large amount of money on the easement deal, given its current financial straits.

"This is a very difficult time," he said, "but as we look at this investment by the state, we see it as very good economic news for the Adirondack communities."

The Adirondack Council, the Adirondack Park's largest environmental organization, praised the Paterson administration for using unspent money from the Environmental Protection Fund to complete a project

that will boost the park's economy while preventing the break-up of large tracts of timberland.

"This agreement is an outstanding use of the state's Environmental Protection Fund to protect local timber industry jobs, provide a boost to the winter recreation economy and help protect the forests at the same time," said Brian Houseal, executive director of the Adirondack Council.

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) was created in 1993 to create a pay-as-you go capital projects fund. It was to be used for large, one-time purchases such as land for parks, landfill closures and historic preservation.

The EPF is funded by a portion of the revenues from the NYS Real Estate Transfer Tax to ensure a reliable source of revenue. Each year during budget negotiations, the governor and the legislature must reach agreement on the level of funding that will go to the EPF and assign specific amounts for various categories, including land protection, land stewardship and water quality.

The 2010-2011 budget included \$0 for land acquisition, \$4.8 million for invasive species eradication, \$2 million for water quality improvement and \$30 million for public land stewardship.

Chamber offers new service to tell skiers about local businesses

The chamber of commerce has offered a new service for members that will put them in front of Big Tupper skiers this winter.

The Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce is installing a 55-inch advertising/display monitor and several smaller monitors in the main Big Tupper Ski Lodge area to promote chamber members.

"The purpose and goal of this system is to promote our lodging, retail, dining, and tavern members to Big Tupper visitors," said David Tomberlin, a chamber board member.

"There is no charge for chamber members to promote their business at Big Tupper on this system."

According to Mr. Tomberlin, chamber members can submit "hot deals," which are current specials being offered by chamber members.

The chamber of commerce is working closely with ARISE to promote local businesses during the 2011 ski season at Big Tupper.

IT'S A GIRL

Whitney Rice & Fred Schuller

Emilie Jane

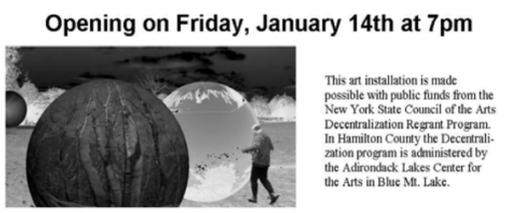
7 lbs., 5 oz.

Dec. 24, 2010

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Snow Dance planned at Big Tupper Saturday

The Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce and ARISE of Northern New York have joined forces to host a "Snow Dance" at the Big Tupper Ski Area on Saturday, January 8 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The event will be family oriented with no charge to attend the dance.

According to organizers, the goal is twofold- to gather folks for a great and fun event in support of Big Tupper opening and to provide an avenue for local businesses to promote and drive business to their establishments.

One season pass to the ski area will be given away at the dance and chamber business members will be on hand to give out coupons and special offers to all visitors. In order for visitors to be entered into the season pass giveaway drawing, they will need tickets which will only be available from Chamber business members on hand. Organizers say this will provide members with the opportunity to distribute coupons, information and more for their businesses.

"We all know that skiing at Big Tupper is dependent on Mother Nature and natural snow," ARISE Chairman Jim LaValley said this week. "Unfortunately, we haven't yet seen the snowfall necessary to create a base suitable for skiing so we're calling in the 'big guns' to get things moving!"

The following is a schedule of events planned for the fun filled afternoon:

- 2 p.m. DJs Andrew McClelland and Pat Bedore.
- 2:30 p.m. Santa Claus arrives delivering the promise of snow.
- 3 p.m. Snow Prayer offered by Pastor Rick Wilburn.
- 3:15 p.m. Storytelling for Big Tupper kids.
- 3:30 p.m. Scottish bagpiper will play with a call to the snow gods.
- 4 p.m. The Mohawk Medicine Man will perform a traditional Native American snow ceremony.

Planning continues on Fire and Ice tourney at park

Planning continues on the Tupper Lake Fire and Ice Golf Tournament planned by the Tupper Lake Rotary and Lions clubs in February.

Joining Rotarians Doug Wright and Mark Moeller and Lions Mike Dechene, Tom LaMere and Dan McClelland on the organizing committee this past week were Golf Pro Brent Smith, former Tupper Lake Golf Course President Tim Larkin, Lyndon Johnson and Bruce Smith.

The event will be staged at the Tupper Lake Municipal Park and on the frozen surface of Raquette Pond on the afternoon of Saturday, Feb. 12.

The new outdoor event will offer something for every member of the family- both golfers and non-golfers.

Five events are planned that afternoon between noon and 4p.m.

Town officials have agreed to furnish the wood for a large bon fire to warm the participants and spectators that day.

The village has agreed to open its washroom building for the event.

Refreshments will be provided by the Lions Club and alcoholic beverages will be served by the folks at P-2's Irish Pub.

At center stage will be a three-hole golf tournament on the ice. Organizers are

hoping to use the same track plowed by the ice racers a week earlier to create their network of tees, fairways and greens.

To keep the play under control, tennis balls will be substituted for golf balls and the holes will be eight inches in size.

The play will be a three-person scramble and golfers can either form their teams in advance or come as individuals and join a team.

Real golf balls, painted black and carrying the names of the sponsoring organization, will be used for the three other contests that day- putting, chipping and a driving contest out onto the pond. In the driving contest a team of helmeted volunteers, under the direction of Mike Dechene, will be out on the pond as ball spotters and retrievers.

The committee's aim is to retrieve all of the black balls hit.

In the chipping contest, for kicks, golfers will chip their balls into an old canoe.

Tom LaMere will be directing the chipping contest and Dan McClelland will be coaxing contestants to drain a 20-foot shot in the putting contest.

Children are expected to enjoy a nine-hole miniature

golf course created in the park for the event. The Doolens at Shaheen's Motel, which offers a miniature golf course here, have loaned the use of some of their mini-putters for the event.

Brent Smith has agreed to furnish all the clubs for the golfing events.

Valuable prizes will go to the best golfers or best teams in the respective events.



Want to know what's going on?

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